

# Alternatives to Policing Subcommittee of the Northampton Policing Review Commission

MEETING AGENDA Wednesday, December 9th

6:30-8pm

Remote Meeting

## **Join the Remote Meeting:**

### **Video conference:**

<https://zoom.us/j/99663337509?pwd=aEdRYTR4WStwcZRjdWs5dEMvWFh4dz09>

**Or by telephone, call:** +1 929 436 2866 US , Meeting ID: 996 6333 7509 Passcode: 224482

1. Call to Order by meeting chairs Javier Luengo-Garrido and Booker Bush a.  
Announcement of Zoom Recording  
b. Roll Call
2. Public Comment 6:30-7pm
3. 20 min Discussion: How do we gain more representation by groups affected by policing
4. 30 min Discussion: Housing
5. 20 min Discussion Document about mental health and policing  
Domestic Violence/sexual abuse Community based policing Restorative Justice  
Substance abuse  
Employment
6. Meeting Minutes Approval
7. Adjourn

## **1.MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido at 6:33 PM.

## **ANNOUNCEMENT OF ZOOM RECORDING**

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido made an announcement that this meeting was being recorded for the public record and would be available on Northampton Open Media, as well as, the City of Northampton website.

## **Roll Call**

Dr. Booker Bush, Co-Chair Present

Javier Luengo-Garrido, Co-Chair Present

City Councilor Alex Jarrett Present

Dana Olivo Not Present

Carol Owen Present

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido announced Commissioner and Cochair Dana Olivo will be stepping down from the commission and that her work and presence on the commission will be missed.

## **2. Public comment (30 minutes)**

Community member Richard Hendrick said he valued the sharing Commissioner Dana Olivo did in the last meeting, when she expressed the balance of caring for her family, as well as the importance of boundaries. He felt this was courageous and was touched that the commission understood.

Commissioner Lois Ahrens (of the Spending & Contracts Subcommittee) received an email asking if the Commission was the appropriate place to where a resident could make a complaint involving the NPD. She said, after reviewing the NPD website, she learned that the only procedure for submitting a complaint about the police was to the police. She said, this seems that the NPD are in the unique position of receiving and evaluating the legitimacy and responses of complaints about themselves. She said when she wrote to Commission members about this, one Commissioner replied that if the person didn't want to file a complaint, that they could call the Chief of Police, and that this did not seem like a satisfactory alternative. She explained further that when reading about the complaint procedure, she saw the person whose responsibility is to address complaints is someone who himself had received a number of public complaints, some of them about racial profiling. She said this is concerning and wondered about Kasper's choice in selecting this person to be in this position.

Community member Henry Morgan read a written testimony of which a summary is included here:

People serving on this subcommittee are commendable in their awareness of the negative effects that police violence has had on the community. They are also aware that the majority of the justifications for this violence is the unfair criminalization of nonviolent behavior. A large portion of the needs motivating criminalized behavior are rights protected under the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The current approach to responding to criminalized behavior is ineffective, violent, and fundamentally reactionary. A paramilitary organization designated to silence those most vulnerable to human rights abuses is unconstitutional and inhumane. The resources being dedicated to state violence should be reallocated to non-violent preventative and effective approaches to establishing justice. Alternatives to state violence should treat the root cause of criminalized behavior, the deprivation of human rights and needs... We have a duty as a democratic civil society to reintegrate into the body politic those who have been deprived of their sovereignty by the criminal justice system.

Community member Jose Adastra said people need to have access to COVID tests, even though they may not have a car or a place to live. He suggested having more conversational meetings so the commission can ask questions of the community organizers. He said we need space to put one unit sheds that lock, as well as bathrooms to join those spaces. He said those spaces should be monitored by their peers and peer support groups. He said this is an alternative to policing because people are being policed on the street and having these unit sheds might help women, especially, feel safe when they can lock their door.

Community member Robert Eastman named Captain Robert Powers as the officer Commissioner Lois Ahrens mentioned. He said she is right to be concerned. He read a letter he signed calling for a resignation that had thousands of signatures which spoke to Captain Powers' history of racism including teaching recruits to profile community members. He agreed that complaints should not be sent to Captain Powers and hopes the commission recommends he resign.

Community member with (phone number 7981) was having trouble unmuting and was invited to connect with Noa Coffey-Moore (Administrative Assistant).

### **3. 20 min Discussion: How do we gain more representation by groups affected by policing**

Commissioner Carol Owens said she had a conversation with Oryz Cohen who was a part of the Freedom Center who is now the Director of the National Empowerment Center. She said he spoke to the center's work and said that they are working on a number of trainings for police and that he's happy to hear the commission is working on alternatives. She wondered if the commission could work through organizations to help identify people who represent these marginalized identities who are willing to talk.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said he likes the idea of going through organizations. He wondered if those organizations would be Service Net or others.

Commissioner Carol Owens clarified the organizations would be activist organizations and not provider organizations.

Commissioner Booker Bush said the commission might want to hear voices from people who are unhoused. He said he is interested in hearing from people who are in public housing. He said it's hard to get those voices into the room because of access to internet, as well as potential obstacles to people feeling included in the center of the conversation. He wondered about having meetings at public housing settings and soliciting input.

Commissioner Alex Jarett said while he was campaigning he knocked on every door he could, including public housing and that he has contacts from that process. He said he can call some people and talk to them. He said it wouldn't necessarily be representative, and that COVID complicates knocking on peoples doors. He said once the City Solicitor offers clarity, perhaps the commission can find a place to do an event outside.

Commissioner Carol Owens reminded the commission it's not so much about a survey, but about asking people to develop a sense of the phenomenon. She said in this case the commission would be looking at residents' experiences across the board of the NPD. She explained, when accessing a sample from people in the margins, it's standard practice to do a convenience sample. She said you're looking as an elite group (in this case those on this commission), you have to talk to people and ask them who else to speak to.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said he's been looking to do this work in terms of outreach. He said the commission can also collect testimony so the person is not put in danger.

Commissioner Booker Bush said he's hoping the City Solicitor allows organizing around this occurring and said he would like to see this happen.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido asked Jose Adastra how he would see this outreach playing out.

Community Jose Adastra said getting testimony from people in town would be great. He said it's hard to get people to be in one place at the same time. He said people have different preferences in terms of offering a video or written testimony. He said some people won't come because they're scared of the police and they're scared to identify themselves because it's vulnerable to put yourself out there against the state.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido asked Jose Adastra if the commission should think about written testimony as well as audio testimony and that the commissioner might name the different ways people can offer testimony.

Community member Jose Adastra said having various formats will make it better for people who want to express themselves differently.

#### **4. 30 min Discussion: Housing**

Commissioner Booker Bush said the work the commission has been doing is hard and taxing. He said he loves this work and that he would like to set boundaries around this work so that

people can stay engaged. He said he's interested in doing things in a way where the commission doesn't lose any more commissioners.

Commissioner Carol Owen said she began writing on the preliminary report. She highlighted a section: why our investigations have centered the experience of residents with regular exposure to current policing practices. As well as re-envisioning public safety in Northampton. She read parts allowed from these sections. ([linked here](#)).

Commissioner Booker Bush asked whether the commission would like to begin discussing some of the thoughts they heard.

Commissioner Alex Jarrett said he loved this writing and said that he put together notes from meetings and wanted to share the document. He said he would like to have a discussion about the process over the next couple of weeks. He talked about the timeline for writing the report. He shared his rough notes in the chat for public access. ([linked here](#)).

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said he likes the overview of Alex's document. He said having a combination of both of these documents might put the commission in a great position in terms of completing the preliminary report.

Commissioner Booker Bush wondered what kind of documents City Council and the Mayor used to receiving.

Commissioner Alex Jarrett listed the Panhandling Report and the Fairhousing Report are examples, and said these reports had many people working on it. He said the commission could look at these examples.

Commissioner Booker Bush said he believes in doing a report that people can look at, read, and are able to take in. He wondered if the report can be as long as the commission wants.

The commissioners discuss the format of the report.

Commissioner Booker Bush asked the commission if anyone felt uncomfortable with anything written in Carol's report.

Commissioner Carol Owens asked if Commissioner Booker Bush was feeling uncomfortable in moving toward all peer-led initiatives and moving out of other models.

Commissioner Booker Bush said this is his new growing point and in hearing people talk about what they're doing in these initiatives, he thinks it's a great idea, but that it's a cognitive jump for him. He said Commissioner Carol Owens' writing puts it in the preferred position.

Commissioner Carol Owens talked about the option of adding in nonarmed professionals to the report.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said he likes the report's discussion of peer-led initiatives. He said he's biased because of the amount of information the commission has received in this area. He said he feels more and more comfortable the more he reads.

Commissioner Carol Owen said she's done a lot of reflection about the policing nature of sending professionals out to respond to crisis, who have a mandate to report. She said it's

possible in these peer-led organizations that there could be social workers involved, but maybe they are unlicensed, and have lived experience so as to not control their behavior or send them some place they will be put in restraints. She said as a professional social worker she sees herself as a policy and community organizing person. She said she would only report if someone, for example, made a claim to lethal violence against another person and that if at all possible, she would try to find a way to not involve the police. She said at some point you have no choice but to go through the police, but she said in these circumstances it gets sticky.

Commissioner Booker Bush said these discussions have had an impact on how he takes care of patients in terms of “labelling” as well as being the paternal dominant figure in medical encounters.

Commissioner Alex Jarett said in terms of these programs the commission is considering, the commission has to think about what the evidence is for them. He said the commission determined there aren't a lot of studies, but yet that that's a false direction to say, because the criminal legal system is not effective, which indicates the commission should strongly advocate to move in that direction as much as it can, while the studies happen. He said the commission needs to document and frame this work.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said this is one of the reasons why the commission has been working hard to bring people from peer-led organizations to come speak. He said, often these studies are public relations exercises because this is part of the industry and that the commission should be cognizant that the institution has received an incredible amount of money. He said we know that the existing model does not work. He explained further, peer-led organizations don't have millions of dollars but what they do have is a different way to do it and that with having organizations that are relevant in their own communities, the focus is on putting the person in the center, which is what we need right now.

The commissioners discussed the next meeting agenda and the timeline of the preliminary report.

Commissioner Carol Owens said she is going to miss Commissioner Dana Olivo and she said she wanted to say to her that she feels her pain and she knows the conflict. She said the mission is compelling and there's a lot of things that don't get done while attending these late night meetings. She wondered about a replacement co chair for Dana.

Commissioner Booker Bush asked Noa Coffey-Moore if they knew of any news in regards to Dana's replacement. Noa Coffey-Moore said they were unaware of Dana's decision until this meeting and that they would keep the commissioners in the loop if they heard any more information.

Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido said he is really going to miss Commissioner Dana Olivo. He said hopefully the replacement will keep both the diversity and voice of experience the commission has had. He thanked all of the community members who spoke and for reminding the commission about the importance of the work. He thanked Noa Coffey-Moore for their focused work.

#### **6. Meeting Minutes Approval- Alternatives to Policing November 9th, 2020**

**Commissioner Alex Jarrett motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes is passed unanimously.**

#### **7. Adjourn**

**Commissioner Booker Bush moved to adjourn. Commissioner Javier Luengo-Garrido seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously at 8:04pm.**